



The Purple Cloud

by Matthew Phipps Shiel (1865 - 1947)

The story details Adam Jeffson's expedition to the North Pole during the 20th century on board the Boreal. Before Jeffson leaves, he hears a sermon by a Scottish priest speaking against Polar research, calling the failure of all previous expeditions the will of God, and prophesying a terrible fate for those who attempt to go against God's will in this. Jeffson at the same time remembers his meeting with a man who claimed that the universe is a place of strife between vague "powers", "The White" and "The Black", for dominance. Throughout the events of the polar journey, the Jeffson gradually discovers that his course has been, for many years, guided by these forces, all the way up to the point where he reaches the pole first. He finds a huge, clear lake of spinning water with a rock island inlaid with inscriptions. When he returns to his camp he notices a moving purple cloud, spreading in the far heavens. He discovers dead animals, all without the slightest sign of injury, and gradually learns of the death of his entire crew on board the Boreal. Jeffson travels towards northern islands, but upon seeing dead of all various races from around the world there (the result of an exodus, escaping the death-bringing cloud) and meeting ships crowded with corpses, he comes instead to the dead continent, walking through London, searching for news of the cloud. *(Wikipedia)*

Total running time: 11:51:39

Cover design by Kathryn Delaney



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